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## BRINGING GIFTS TO CHRIST.

A CHRISTMAS HOMILY.

WHEN the wise men of the East, after diligent inquiry, had found the young child Jesus lying in the manger, they presented unto him the gifts they had brought, the costly things of Eastern traffic, — things that monarchs were wont to give each other in token of friendship or respect, — gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Such were the first offerings made to Christ, — such the first homage paid him who was to find on earth no place for his weary head. How they contrasted with his present condition, — gold, frankincense, and myrrh, there in the stable of an Eastern inn, brought as the tribute of the age and wisdom of a far country to the first rising star of a new faith! How they contrasted with his whole life, — a life of weariness and self-sacrifice, of poverty and meekness, of ministering, rather than being ministered to! Gold, frankincense, and myrrh for him whose only crown was of thorns, whose only royal robe was flung about him in mockery, whose only sceptre was a reed, who died upon a cross! Gold, frankincense, and myrrh for Christ! It was well meant; but what had he to do with these?

However incongruous the kind of gifts thus presented may seem, the feeling that prompted the long travel and the costly presents is one which it were well for us all to have. Dwelling in a distant country, subjects of another faith, rumors of a new

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prince about to come had reached these venerable students of the heavens; and, at the appearing of the new star, they had left their quiet pursuits that they might pay their homage — the homage of years and wisdom — to him who, according to the teachings of their art, was to exercise a mighty power in the world. Filled with anticipations of such a sort, they must have faltered when the star stood over the stable of a common inn of the little city of Bethlehem. But they had faith, and, leaving their gifts at the feet of the young child, returned to their own country.

The nature of the mission and the character of the kingdom of Christ are now beginning to be truly understood. He stands before us greater than kings, the first of created beings; not only worthy of homage, but the only worthy object of homage, save Him who is his Father, as He is ours. Not as kings desired, in those old days, to be worshipped on obsequious knees, with vain words and costliest gifts, does he ask us to reverence him; not in outward pomp and show and cost does he seek the tokens of a real love and a true service; not such gifts as the world has does he ask, or will he accept. His place is in the heart: the reverence of the heart he seeks, and only the consecration of the heart will he accept. Only do we wisely reverence Jesus, when we prostrate ourselves before him, and consecrate every gift we may possess, every power we may acquire, to his sole service.

We have, all of us, gifts of nature, heaven-descended bestowals, of some sort or other. These we are apt selfishly to consider our own, and use for our own purposes. We take to ourselves the glory, instead of giving it to God, and deprive him of that right which he has to their highest use. A man of great intellect and superior intellectual attainments will look into the world to see in what way those talents may be made most available to himself. He tries to find what the world desires, — what will please it best, and secure the rewards he craves. How much of the talent, genius, promise, of the world has been prostituted so! how much been turned to basest uses! A man like Byron or Bulwer or Eugene Sue has in his hands the capacity for untold good or evil. The world for whose taste he panders is evil, and so his vast powers are turned over to the side of Satan, — his gifts presented, consecrated to, accepted by, the great element of evil. The sculptor, painter, astronomer, philosopher, have like power; and

the various branches they pursue, as they unfold them, may develop the power and love and wisdom of God, — may sway and lift the soul, or they may plunge it into the deep waters of sensuality and atheism. Great men have too often turned their powers this way, and the world suffers grievously from their error. Their powers were not lent them for such purposes. They are not theirs to do with as they choose. They have no right to court the approval of men, or magnify themselves in their eyes, at the expense of holiness, purity, truth. These gifts are God's loans. They are to be consecrated to the service of the Redeemer, laid humbly at his feet, and devoted to his purposes. No power has got its true direction — is in the right sphere of development — that is not consecrated to the work of Christ; that is not used in subservience to the highest ends; that has not always before it the accomplishment of something more or less directly connected with the unfolding and establishment of the truth as it is in Jesus. Men — like West or Cole the painters, like Nichol the astronomer, like the present popular lecturer on natural history in our neighborhood, or like him who, from the "old red sandstone" of Scotland, has developed truth that overthrows the skeptical assertions of the "Vestiges of Creation" — who use their powers to develop God's purposes and plans, to interpret the history of God's works and ways; who never lose sight of the great underlying truths, and the great overruling Providence, — such are men whose gifts, consecrated to their Master, are doing well a work which genius has too often despised and left undone. No goodlier sight can be than such men submitting their powers to the disposal of the Spirit of truth; themselves, as it were, standing by, and only lifting the curtain that we may see into such truths as their efforts have developed. Blessed the men who will bring their gifts, the best that they have, and lay them at the feet, and devote them to the service, of the holy Jesus!

Just now there is one attracting the admiring attention and respectful homage of this Western hemisphere, as she has already of the more enlightened portion of the Eastern. Never did a private individual, never did a woman, attract so much notice, such enthusiastic regard; — alas that it should be so foolishly and annoyingly testified! Never did success of statesman or warrior equal that of this humble woman; never did human

praise seem more lavish or better deserved. And why is it all? Why that our oldest and most sedate, as our youngest and most thoughtless, — ay, these rather than those, — should be so moved from the centre of their gravity? Is it because a young woman who has stood before kings, and won the praise and the bounty of crowned heads by her marvellous voice, has come to these far shores to startle us with notes almost superhuman? Partly, but not mainly, I think. That *voice* might attract *as great* crowds, but not *such* crowds, — might turn some heads and hearts, but not such as now bend beneath the potent away and nameless witchery of her song. *It* could not alone achieve the fame which will always attach itself to her memory. It is not her *gift* that has made her celebrated and beloved, but that she has presented unto Christ her gift, consecrated it to him, his service, and uses it to blessed ends, — an angel of sweet charities wherever she goes. It is not that she sings as angels might, but that she does as angels do, — stoops to the wants and woes and wretchedness and ignorance of men, and leaves her benison as she passes. Thus she gets this mighty grasp upon the souls of men, calling up the best feelings of their nature, revealing to them hidden elements of virtue in themselves, making them go away feeling better that they have heard her. Long before I had heard a note of hers, her *deeds of love*, in happiest unison with the holy spirit of the Master, had thrilled me, as the *voice* could never, and made my being vibrate with the harmony. Great performers often move one with wonder and admiration at the perfection of their art, but the *soul* remains untouched; so evidently there is no high consecration of their powers. Here the deep waters of the Spirit are moved at their fountains, for art has become the handmaid of nature, and been baptized of grace; and you feel that this woman, instead of selfishly using her powers for her own aggrandizement, is doing what God would have us all do with our powers, — applying them to the noblest ends, making her gift a coöperative principle in the great duty of showing forth the goodness of God and the loveliness of virtue.

Now, here is a grand duty of life. We have all gifts of greater or less magnitude, and they ought *all* — the humblest power of the humblest individual — to be presented to Christ, and used in his service. They are all we have to give, and they are what he asks. Not myrrh and frankincense, more grateful to the pam-



pered senses of luxury and pomp, than one humble power of a man, or a woman, or a child, given up to Christ; turned from ignoble purposes, selfish ends, — sanctified so.

But some one says, "How can I do this? I am a plain mechanic, working all day hardly at my trade, busy with my hands in a prescribed routine of labor. I am poor, have had little advantage, do not see any special gift that I have, nor how I shall present it to my Master, or what do when I have done it." Another says, "I am a lonely woman, getting my pittance by my needle, scarcely keeping my body from the wants and inclemency of the season, with no time for others, and no gifts for Christ." And here a child looks up in wonder, that it should have any thing to give to Christ. All these say, It is well for the great and gifted to consecrate their powers, but *they* have none.

This is because men do not understand what their gifts are, nor wherein consists a consecration of them. It is a gift to be able to handle a plough or an axe or a needle, or to run about in the untrammelled liberty and glee of childhood. Whoever, by holy thought, makes these subsidiary to his own spiritual training, sees in these God-given capacities causes for gratitude and demands for action, uses them for others as well as for himself, consecrates them to the service of that Master whose great work it was to interpret God, by means of whose gospel it is that he knows how to refer these back to the Deity, and connect them with the thought of him. It is not the amount of power for which a man is responsible, but the direction he gives to that amount given him; and if the one talent which exhausts itself at the bench, or in the seam, or in the fleet limbs of childhood, is used humbly, honestly, religiously, it has been consecrated to its highest purpose, is more pleasing to Jesus than all vain oblations and sacrifices of costly things, and will do for your souls what gold and frankincense and myrrh never could do for the first worshippers about Messiah's cradle.

But we are none of us so poor as to be merely working with our hands for daily bread. Every one is something more, better than this, — has more capacity, other gifts, — even the very humblest, — for Christ. We are not merely machines for the accomplishment of so much daily labor. Our life is not first, nor mainly, here. We are moral, spiritual, — all of us; have moral,

spiritual gifts, powers capable of culture; and, if cultivated in the right direction, if consecrated, yielding a large and blessed return. We may not have voices which shall charm a world; but we have lips that may sing sweetly of the love of God, or that may speak the words of truth, of charity, of sympathy; that may plead for the oppressed, rebuke wrong, and magnify God. We may not be able to collect the wealth that shall endow hospitals, or establish charities or churches; but we can do the simple deed of love, the homely, unseen, needed act, that shall cheer a fainting heart, minister to a distressed body, or pacify a disquieted spirit. We may not move with our eloquence, or astonish with our grace; but there is an eloquence and a grace in the quiet bearing of one's burden, in the meek acceptance of the cross beneath which you totter in resignation, patience, faith, that shall outweigh the mere eloquence of unholy lips, the graces of unsanctified lives. In any sphere in life in which you move, though it be only in the confined limits of your sick chamber, there is a chance for the noblest consecration of the highest gifts, God gives a soul, to the service of Christ. For his highest gifts are the spiritual powers which ally us to himself, — powers which we may pervert, and by perverting they shall drag us as far below our present selves, as by right using we shall lift ourselves above what we are now. Perverted, they make us earthly, sensual, devilish, without God in the world, mere grovellers in the pollution and mire of sensuality and sin; but used well — for Christ — they lift us into his image, and make us joint inheritors with him; participating now in the triumphs into which his spirit leads, and preparing the way for the complete victory hereafter.

To Christ, then, we need to bring *all* that we are or have, — every thought and purpose of our hearts, every capacity of our spirits, and every faculty of our bodies; to present our bodies and our souls living sacrifices, holy and acceptable, which is our reasonable service. In vain shall we seek him, if it be not to lay at his feet our best, our costliest offerings; the powers given us, and the powers attained by us. Many are they who have seen the star in the East, and who have come to look upon the child, and have called themselves votaries of his; but they have left no earnest tokens of their faith lying at his feet, have subjected no power or passion or will to him, have never known one genuine

act of sacrifice to the cause of Jesus. Many are they who covet the reputation of his worshippers, who would make men think that they had paid an accepted homage, who have joined or built a church, or battled for some sect, while all the time the unregenerate heart, with its vile appetites and passions, burned within them, and no one power had been submitted to the sway of gospel truths, no one effort consecrated to the Saviour's service. It needs some substantial token to prove the sincerity of a man's professions, some costly offering, hardly earned, and brought from afar, — the gold, the frankincense, the myrrh, of a pure heart, of earnest, manly, growing virtue ; not a formal declaration of allegiance, but a presentation of gifts, — an entire, hearty resignation of them to a higher and a better Will. The magi *left* their gifts, — not only brought and showed and offered, but *left* them, — such gifts as monarchs make to monarchs, the costliest things their far country could produce. Can we do less, — less than *leave* our offerings, our gifts, with Christ, to be used by him, as his spirit working in us shall direct ?

And this should be a glad service, rendered with rejoicing ; a free gift, brought not with listless, lagging feet, because we *must* ; but with joy and gladness, because we *will*, — a free-will offering of the heart, of the best gifts in our possession. God loves a cheerful giver, and the deed only blesses when it is done with cheerfulness. How shall the glad, hearty consecration of our powers to Christ bless us ; — our deeds, our affections, our aspirations, our desires, the best we have and all we have ! It is this the Saviour gave *to* us, it is this he asks *of* us ; and he may well feel that they dishonor him, and are dead to all his love, who have only a paltry offering, a form, an outside faith, a cold prayer, a languid aspiration, a selfish life. He has given his *best* to us, — his *life* ; why shall we not give our best to him, — *our lives* ? It should be done ; it must be done ; else, having refused to consecrate our gifts to him while here, we shall be refused of him hereafter those gifts which he has promised the faithful.

J. F. W. W.

## CHRISTMAS CAROL.

PILE on the Christmas logs,  
Higher and higher:  
Cheerily, cheerily  
Crackles the fire.

Now let the bells ring out  
Merrily, merrily;  
Now let the children shout  
Cheerily, cheerily.

Let no harsh voices sound  
Drearly, drearily;  
Let nought but joy abound,  
Merrily, merrily.

Now let home-voices sound,  
Brimful of meaning;  
Now let bright eyes abound,  
Radiantly beaming.

Let not a note be heard  
Breathing of sorrow;  
Let not a soul bring here  
Care for the morrow.

Pile on the Christmas logs,  
Higher and higher:  
Cheerily, cheerily  
Crackles the fire.

Herald of future bliss!  
Joyously dawning;  
Hail to thee! hail to thee!  
Bright Christmas morning!

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Indeed 'tis a day that may well be bright,  
For the "Star in the East" hath made it light,  
And the sacred birth of the Undefined  
Is promise of bliss to the little child.

And now is the mother's true time for prayer,  
When all her household are gathered there,  
And the joyous young group around her knee  
Are filling her heart with Love's mystery ;  
And the Holy Love which encircleth all  
Is the God who marketh the sparrow's fall :  
He has guarded her loved through every ill,  
And, living or dying, has kept them still ;  
For His is the true love which never errs,  
More holy and steady and strong than hers.

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Then pray on your Christmas holiday ;  
Pray for your loved ones while yet ye may ;  
Pray, ere there cometh the trial-hour,  
For the Christmas prayer hath redeeming power.

ARRITA.

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IF the repentance of the sinner communicates joy to the heavenly world, there must be pleasure in the sight of Fidelity fondly sweeping among the waste of things for the lost piece of virtue ; Hope sitting on the shore of evil, trying to discern the form of the beloved one in the distant wreck ; Affection welcoming the weather-worn memories of other days, opening its doors to the promise and aspiration of a new life, and healing the wounds which sin has made. If Love cannot forgive, how shall Justice ever ? — *Richard Edney.*

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THE religious tie is perhaps as strong as can bind two hearts together ; the tie that comprises time and eternity, God and man ; that has for its basis the most solemn and liberal, the most simple and magnificent, exercises of the soul ; that sweeps the earth in quest of objects to pity or to save, and still finds in the nearest and homeliest duties the repose of contentment, the affluence of satisfaction, and the lustre of fame ; that moves with Destiny, and reposes on Providence ; that loves Love, exalts in the Pure and swells in the Light, as the new-starting bud of the spring anemone. — *Richard Edney.*

## THE CURRENTS IN THE VOYAGE OF LIFE;

A NEW YEAR'S SERMON.

BY REV. A. P. PEABODY, OF PORTSMOUTH, N.H.

ACTS, xxvii. 17. — "They strake sail, and so were driven."

THE ocean is permeated by currents, which often bear a ship in a direction opposite to that in which her sails are set, and which noiselessly sweep her on, when she seems becalmed. Thus the navigator cannot trust for the knowledge of his position to his log alone, but must daily renew his observation of fixed points in the heavens. In no respect does the trite comparison of life, to a voyage apply more forcibly than in this. We do not always make progress in the direction in which we set sail; and, when we think ourselves stationary, we are unconsciously borne away by strong currents, whose force we did not anticipate, and cannot calculate. Thus, in order to know where we are, and how far and in what direction we have gone, we must take observations of the heavens, — of the law of God and the life of Christ. For such observations the present is a peculiarly appropriate time; and, that I may aid you in your self-examination, permit me to group what I have to say under the two chief items of my nautical comparison, — the currents and the sails; the influences to which we yield, the energies which we put forth; the degree to which we float on circumstances, that in which we govern them.

Life is full of currents. No one of us is the same that he was at the beginning of the last year. Many of us, I fear, have trusted ourselves entirely to the currents, and have let them bear us on without resistance. But, if so, it has been to our loss and damage. It is idle to say that the world is generally right, and that the influences around us may be safely trusted. There is one fact which shows us the contrary. We can as yet point to no community, to no extended circle of society, the majority of whose members are guided by principle, live as spiritual beings, and keep religious ends in view. So long as this is the case, there will be a solemn emphasis in the declaration, "Whosoever will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God;" and in the

exhortation, "Be not conformed to this world." Where the tone of general feeling and habit is not positively bad, it is low, unspiritual, unfavorable to the growth of kind or devout affections. Then, too, there are certain eddies of immense power, into one or another of which most of us are drawn, and in every year's spiral circuit are constantly approaching the vortex.

I have no doubt that among you there are many who are conscious of having, during the last year, made no effort to improve, and, at the same time, of having deliberately taken no retrograde movement, and who imagine, therefore, that this year finds them with the same characters with which they entered upon the last. But this is very far from being the case. Through the influences to which you have passively yielded, all your prominent traits of character have acquired a fixedness, depth, and power, which render them more fully yours, and make them much more difficult of change. Are you self-indulgent? Your power of self-control is less than it was a year ago. You approach nearer the verge of excess. Your prudent friends oftener tremble for you, and the more because you are so wholly unaware of the change, so secure of a virtue which you take no pains to defend or cherish. Are you indolent? Sloth has hung new clogs about your feet, new weights upon your spirit. You are roused to effort with more difficulty than formerly, and are fast sinking into a lethargy, from which the resurrection-trumpet alone can startle you. Are you living for pleasure only? Though the zest of enjoyment may be less, the necessity of pursuit is greater than formerly. The void in your soul, which you seek to fill with the frivolities of life, grows deeper and more exacting; and there never was a time when trifles seemed so essential and momentous to you as now. Are you an eager competitor in the arena of traffic and of gain? The love of money has been growing upon you without your consciousness. You perhaps think yourself generous. You may have been so. You may now be not wholly otherwise; but you are less generous than formerly. The more you acquire, the harder it is for you to give. Avarice is fastening upon you, clenching your grasp, freezing your heart; and, if you leave yourself to the current, death alone can save you from a sordid and miserly old age. Are you living without religious thought or purpose, without prayer, without reference to the world of



retribution? You perhaps imagine heaven as near you as in your childhood, and suppose that you can readily recall the religious impressions of your early days. But the current has been setting away from the celestial shore. Thoughts that were once familiar have grown dim and distant. The image of God, that used to rest on outward scenes and passing events, no longer meets your eye. Your conscience has become less quick, discriminating, and tender. Without your formally disowning a single duty, or denying a single truth of Christianity, it has lost every year more and more of its hold upon you, and your character never showed so little of its influence as now. Thus by the mere lapse of time does character always change for the worse, where there is no effort to make it better.

In what I have said, I by no means speak reproachfully of God's world. It is a good world, and every thing in it is excellent, beautiful, and perfect in its place and use. Yet, of many things, the heaven-appointed use is the overcoming and renouncing of them. They are tests of strength and principle, — obstacles to be surmounted by earnest effort; and, by means of them, our souls gain vigor. But the world without God — the world with a thick veil drawn between earth and heaven — in which the majority of our fellow-men live, is a bad world, and all its influences are bad. We cannot yield to them, without making shipwreck of faith, piety, and spirituality; without losing the freshness and beauty of the virtues that we once practised; scarcely without suffering those virtues to become at first mere outward decencies, and then to lapse into the vices that are the most nearly allied to them.

It is sad to watch the advancing years of one who makes no effort to improve. I might trace for you the course of a young man, who started in life with refined tastes and generous sentiments, with approval and admiration for all that was excellent, — in fine, just such a young man as Jesus would have regarded with love, and pronounced not far from his kingdom. But he was not in the kingdom. His good habits were not founded on principle. His approval of goodness sprang not from love of God in the heart. His generosity was a sentiment, not a virtue. With his opening manhood, whatever of the good seed had been sown in his soul sprang up among thorns. His lot was cast among those who looked to no end beyond the gain or pleasure of the day;

whose souls had become materialized by engrossing occupations, or by equally engrossing amusements. There was neither refinement nor spirituality in their communings; but all their influence was adapted to repress feeling, to deaden sympathy, and to confine interest and effort to earthly good. With them piety was fanaticism, and charity was Quixotism. Under such tutelage, those who have followed this young man with a friendly eye have witnessed the gradual wearing away of what gave a charm to his early promise. His face has lost its frank and guileless expression. His voice has parted with its rich and fervent tones. He has no longer a ready appreciation of the beautiful and the good. His heart has no response for elevated sentiment. He has become worldly, sordid, and mean, or else frivolous, giddy, and reckless, or, it may be, headstrong, harsh, and obdurate; and the friends of his youth fail to recognize any of those traits which awakened their early love for him, and their fond hopes in his behalf.

In like manner, I might draw the picture, which has too many originals in real life, of the young woman who almost took Mary's place at her Saviour's feet. But she did not take it. The covenant-angel hovered long over her steps, and only waited for her to speak the word of invitation to fold his wings over her spirit; but earth-born angels — the cares or the gayeties of opening womanhood — contended with him for the possession of her soul, and, because she remained passive, they won the day. While she suspects not that her character has undergone any change, she has gradually lost her interest, not only in religious truth, but in all subjects possessed of intrinsic dignity and excellence. She has grown heartless, frivolous, and selfish. No generous impulse stirs her activity; no prompt and cordial sympathy marks her social life. She has, it may be, in a family of her own, the happiness of others confided to her care, — the immortal souls of children entrusted to her nurture. And she is perhaps faultless in the order or the thrift of her household, — in the show for the world's eye, or in the arrangements for the material comfort of those under her roof. But in her youth you would have expected that she would be one of those, of whom it is said in Holy Writ, "She openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness." Yet you can trace nothing of all this in her domestic character, — no spirituality, no outgoing of refined thought and elevated feeling, no influences adapted to educate the

souls under her charge for lofty purposes, — for virtue, piety, and heaven. In looks, voice, manners, and character, she is simply a woman of the world, endowed with just those superficial excellencies, without which she must forfeit her good name among those as worldly as herself, but utterly unfit for every relation, office, and duty appertaining to the spiritual life.

Such is the growth of character earthward, from the "heaven" that "lies about us in our infancy;" such the "shades of the prison-house," that "close upon" those who abandon themselves to external influences, — float on the current, — take life as they find it.

Here, then, we have a most important and timely topic for self-examination. Let each ask himself, "Have I, during the year that has just closed, been conscious of moral effort? Have I strenuously employed my own judgment; given heed to my own conscience; followed my own convictions of duty; sought to bring the highest motives to bear upon my own independent will? Or have I passively yielded myself to surrounding voices and examples, — suffered circumstances to determine my course; random influences to control my will; a habit formed, I know not how, to bear sway over my life? Have I been under the government of fixed principle, or of random impulse? Have I had in view moral and spiritual aims, earthly aims, or none? Have I sought to grow in goodness? or have I taken it for granted that I was already good enough? Have I exercised constant watchfulness over my soul and life? or have I left my soul unguarded, my life unguided?" These are the self-questionings with which we should enter on another of the few stages of probation which remain for us, before the account of our earthly life is rendered to the Judge of the living and the dead.

I have thus spoken of the passive life which we are so prone to lead. The wary navigator uses all diligence to ascertain the direction and strength of the ocean-currents. He shuns them if he can; and, if not, when they would bear him from his port, he so sets his sails and steers his ship as to stem or cross them, and, while within their influence, never remits his vigilance, or loses a momentary advantage of which he can avail himself. Such is the law of Christian navigation towards the celestial city. The Christian never yields to the current, but always seeks to stem or cross it. And, though the mariner may encounter calms or

adverse winds, and with all his skill may make no headway, or, with sails all set, may lose more than he gains, thanks be to God the wind that fills the Christian's sails never veers and never lulls. That wind is the breath of prayer, and it always sets heavenward. The full sail and the favoring wind—effort and prayer—are the vital forces of character and of progress. Neither is complete without the other. Effort alone terminates in hand-work, in formalism, in heartless obedience, in the form of godliness without its power, in the body of devotion without its soul. Prayer alone degenerates into vague, feeble sentimentality. Nor need the two be disjoined at any moment. They must concur, like the sail and the wind, in every progressive movement of the spirit. The true prayer is that which not only desires, but strives; not only meditates on God, but aspires toward him; not only communes with, but transcribes, the divine excellence. And true religious effort is acted prayer, — prayer lived out, — inasmuch as it is inspired, sustained, and strengthened by consciousness of God's presence, reference to his will, and desire for his blessing.

Never were such prayer and such effort more needful than now. Our times have peculiar perils. There is, I suppose, little danger of open infidelity, but much of that indifference which does not deem religion of sufficient importance for hearty denial or opposition. The temptations to gross vice are not, I suppose, more numerous than at previous times, though their pestilence is always abroad. But material industry has been so rapidly developed, and such a stimulus has been given to every form of worldly activity within the last few years, as to engross men's thought and interest in worldly affairs more fully than half a century ago would have been deemed possible. With daily intelligence from the whole earth, with materials for speculation from all the courts and markets of Europe, with tides in the political and the mercantile world ebbing and flowing almost as often as the tides of the ocean, with public and private enterprise stimulated to the last degree, our danger is of merging our spiritual being in mere outward activity; of being machines rather than men; of letting material things crowd God, character, heaven, and eternity out of view. Retirement and quiet have grown obsolete terms with many. Self-communion they deem a venerable pulpit-phrase, handed down from the cloisters of the middle ages. Character they think synonymous with reputation; worth, with thrift; vir-

tue, with activity. So long as the mails are stopped and places of business closed on Sunday, they are willing, for the sake of old associations, to let religion utter its voice in the church, on condition that it shall not intrude on secular time, shall have no place in the affairs of the nation, and bear no sway in the seat of traffic. But religion, as an inseparable element of being, as the guide of life, as the highest aim and end of man, is an idea sadly uncongenial with the spirit of our times. Would we maintain it, it can only be by persevering prayer and earnest effort, by the faithful discipline of our own souls, and by diligent communion with the Father of our spirits.

My friends, has the past year borne witness to such prayer and effort on our part? Strong currents have been setting against devotion; against self-communion; against independent, conscientious action. The year was one of unusual excitement and activity on themes of secular interest; and, with many of us, the actual and lawful claims of worldly affairs seemed, though we had no right to make them, engrossing. Have those of us who call ourselves Christians kept our Christian calling steadily in view? Has the end of our faith — the heavenly prize — held its place in our sight high above all secular prizes, all earthly ends? Have our souls maintained their independent life and activity? Have we sought, watched, cherished, the growth of principle, of character, of piety toward God, of justice and charity to man, of inward sincerity and purity? Have we remembered that we are but sojourners here, — citizens of a heavenly country?

I trust that, at least among those who have named the name of Christ, the last year did not pass wholly without prayer and religious effort. But it demands our earnest inquiry, whether they were sufficiently diligent and fervent to stem all opposing influences, and to ensure our actual growth in goodness. The navigator, among strong currents, trusts not to the fact of his having set sail against them, and never lets a fit time pass without ascertaining his place by observation of the heavens. It were well for us to do the same as regards our spiritual estate, — to mark from time to time our feelings and habits with reference to God, Christ, duty, and eternity; so that at any epoch, by comparing our present with our past condition, we could answer the momentous question, "Progress or no progress?" Was the first sabbath of the last year, as your preacher strove to make it, a season of solemn

self-recollection? Did you then inquire in what relation you stood to the objects of religious worship, reverence, and duty? If so, you may now perhaps be able to answer such questions as these: "Do I feel, less than a year ago, the power of my easily besetting sins? Are temptations which I then found strong, weaker now? Have virtues which were difficult grown easier? Is my sense of the divine presence more constant and controlling? Does heaven seem nearer, and its life more attractive? Do I think of Christ with warmer affection, and take more delight whenever I recognize in myself marks of kindred to him? Is prayer a less embarrassing and a happier exercise? and does its spirit diffuse itself more habitually and constantly over my daily life? Do I more readily check resentment, petulance, censoriousness? Have I become more forbearing, generous, charitable? Is my consciousness of the divine acceptance more clear; my hope of heavenly happiness firmer and brighter?" Such questions as these it were well that we were able to answer, not yearly, but daily. Not without benefit, though seemingly mechanical, has been the practice adopted by many excellent people, of making daily or frequent record of their states of feeling and character; of the way-marks of their spiritual progress. Such a diary, if not kept in form, we can keep on the fleshly tablets of our hearts; and thus, by daily observation of the unchanging luminaries of the spiritual firmament, and the comparison of our present with our past selves, may know whether we are making progress; whether we are simply stationary; or whether prayer has been too cold, and effort too languid, to hold our place against adverse currents of example and influence.

I have thus set before you themes for self-examination, appropriate at all times, especially so at a season like this. Such thoughts may seem out of harmony with the congratulations and hopes of the New Year; but how congenial are they with the scenes of desolation, grief, and mortal agony, which for some of us must mark its record! The procession of the year's dead will soon begin to move, and who of us will lead it God only knows. But never can it be easier than now for us to prepare to join it. We, who watch by the dying, are often witnesses of their regret that the subjects of religious thought had been postponed till death drew near; and, whether it be through the serene joy which mature faith and piety shed over the parting scene, or through

the trepidation and anxiety of those who attempt to hurry on the preparation-robe while death's messenger is at the door, we never leave such a scene without a new impression of the momentous importance of a Christian life, as the only sure means of a happy death. May the admonishing voices of the season and of the Divine Spirit so touch our hearts, and hallow our coming lives, that, when time for us shall be no longer marked by the revolutions of these lower heavens, we may be found meet for that sphere where the sun never sets, and the moon goes not down; "for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

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## NOAH AND THE FLOOD.

BY REV. JAMES W. THOMPSON, D.D.

(Continued from the December No., p. 538, vol. vii.)

WE have now given the substance of the Bible-account of the deluge; and it must be admitted, that it has difficulties in the way of our faith very hard to overcome. They need not be stated here. Found in any other book, with nothing in science or history to corroborate it, we should say the story was intrinsically incredible, and put it down at once as a gross exaggeration of the truth, or a pure fiction. But, with the light on the subject derived from other sources, — seeing, too, how well-preserved are the links of tradition from Noah to Abraham and from Abraham to Moses, — it becomes us to pause long before we venture to say, that, in its main features, it is not authentic. Now, what is there to confirm this account of the deluge? It is verified by two important witnesses; namely, geological science and tradition. Although learned geologists may differ as to the *universality* of a deluge, and also as to the degree to which the fact of such a deluge may account for certain phenomena usually ascribed to it, — such as the spoils of the ocean deposited upon the tops of mountains, and the remains of animals imbedded in countries where they have never been known to live, and fossil plants and trees far away from their native latitudes, — yet they agree that the appearances of the earth in many parts clearly indicate the violent action of water in such force and quantity as is paralleled



by nothing within the knowledge of man. They agree that in the earlier periods of the earth it must have been subjected to stupendous and devastating convulsions in the form of *floods* and *volcanic eruptions*. Evidences of these they find everywhere, plain and indisputable. While, then, geology may fail to establish the fact of the *particular* deluge we are considering, or of any single universal deluge, it has nothing, as we understand, to weaken the probability of *such* a one; and enough to make it certain that one or more deluges of great extent must have occurred at a very early age. So much for geology. Now as to tradition. The ancient Egyptians believed — so says the “Timæus” of Plato — that the earth had been subjected to several conflagrations and *deluges*, whereby the gods arrested the career of human wickedness, and purified the world from guilt. The sect of Stoics taught the doctrine of world-destroying *catastrophes*, — the *deluge* sweeping away the whole human race, and annihilating all animal and vegetable growths; and the *ecpyrosis*, or conflagration, dissolving the globe itself. The Hindoos are more explicit, devoting an entire Parána to the circumstances of their traditional flood. Here is a translation: “At the close of the last Calpa, there was a general destruction, occasioned by the sleep of Brahma, whence his creatures in different worlds were drowned in a vast ocean. The Lord of the universe, loving one pious man, who implored him, and intending to preserve him from the sea of destruction caused by the depravity of the age, thus told him how he was to act: ‘In seven days from the present time, O thou tamer of enemies! the three worlds will be plunged in an ocean of death; but, in the midst of the destroying waves, a large vessel sent by me for thy use shall stand before thee. Then shalt thou take all the medicinal herbs, all the variety of seeds; and, accompanied by seven saints, encircled by pairs of all brute animals, thou shalt enter the spacious ark, and continue in it secure from the flood.’” The Chaldeans also had a Noah, named Xisuthrus; and this is the story told of him by Berosus: “The Deity appeared to him in a vision, and warned him that on a certain day there would be a flood, by which mankind would be destroyed. He therefore enjoined him . . . to build a vessel, and take with him into it his friends and relations, and to convey on board every thing necessary to sustain life, together with all the different animals, both birds and quadrupeds, and trust himself

fearlessly to the deep. . . . He obeyed the divine admonition, and built a vessel five stadia in length and two in breadth. Into this he put every thing which he had prepared; and, last of all, conveyed into it his wife, his children, and his friends. After the flood had been upon the earth, and was in time abated, he sent out birds from the vessel, which, not finding any food, nor any place whereupon they might rest their feet, returned to him again. After an interval of some days, he sent them forth a second time; and they now returned with their feet colored with mud. He made a trial a third time with these birds; but they returned to him no more: from whence he judged that the surface of the earth had appeared above the waters. He therefore made an opening in the vessel, and, upon looking out, found that it was stranded upon the side of some mountain, upon which he immediately quitted it. . . . He then paid his adoration to the earth; and, having constructed an altar, offered sacrifices to the gods." — The Greeks also had traditions of great and desolating floods. Those of Ogyges and of Deucalion in particular are familiar to us. That of the latter, as described by Ovid, translated by Dryden, has many points of resemblance to that of the Bible. After describing the progress of the flood till it had buried the earth and all creatures, Parnassus, the Grecian Ararat, comes in sight, and,

"High on the summit of this dubious cliff,  
Deucalion wafting moored his little skiff.  
He with his wife were only left behind  
Of perished man: *they two were human kind.*"

Now, whether these traditions be regarded as running back, and having their root in the Noachic story, or as referring to independent events of a similar nature, they all go to establish the point, that, in the early ages of the world, a general belief existed that a wide-spread deluge, terribly destructive of life, from which only a very few human beings had escaped as by miracle to replenish the earth with inhabitants, had occurred. How can we better account for this belief than by admitting the general truth of the statement in Genesis as the ground of it; or by allowing the reality of other similar deluges, and so admitting the intrinsic probability of this one? Of the accuracy of that statement in its main points, we see, then, no sufficient reason to doubt. If asked

whether we believe the deluge was literally universal, our reply is, that that is a question for natural science rather than biblical criticism; but that, at any rate, the description is faithful to the *appearance*. They who survived the flood saw the highest mountains covered with its waters, and they naturally inferred that there could be no land dry in all the earth. If asked whether pairs of all animals then existing in any part of the earth were preserved in the ark, we answer, It is enough for us to believe that those were thus saved that were native to the country of Noah, and liable to be swept away and destroyed; for, to an Asiatic mind of that day, the whole earth was of very small extent, compared with its present ascertained dimensions. If asked whether all mankind, save Noah and his family, perished in that flood, we reply, This was undoubtedly the belief of Noah and his descendants in the Jewish line, even down to the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews; and we see no insurmountable objections to it. If the authority of Sir William Jones is not overset by the Champollionists and other hieroglyphical expositors, it is proved "that the inhabitants of Asia, and consequently of the whole earth, sprang from THREE BRANCHES OF ONE STEM; that we find no certain monument, or even probable tradition, of nations planted, empires and states raised, laws enacted, cities built, navigation improved, commerce encouraged, arts invented, or letters contrived, above twelve, or at most fifteen or sixteen, centuries before the birth of Christ; and that seven hundred or a thousand years would have been fully adequate to the supposed propagation, diffusion, and establishment of the human race." So that one of the principal objections, — the supposed want of time for peopling the earth since the date of the flood, — and another, still more important, the supposed incongruity of races, — fall to the ground. How far the judgment above expressed is entitled to confidence, this is not the place for us either to discuss or summarily to decide. Indeed, we are disposed to leave all such questions to the investigations of science, guided, as they ought ever to be, by a profound and religious reverence for truth.

We conclude by mentioning a few incidents in the life of Noah after he left the ark. In the first place, he received a divine assurance, which gave him great joy, that the world should never again be visited with such an overthrow; and that assurance was

set in the heavens, arching the clouds with a bow of beauty. Whether now for the first time he saw that bow, or whether an inward voice taught him to regard it, though a familiar object, as thenceforth a divine pledge, we are not informed, nor is it material. Sufficient that there the Lord had placed it; and that, beholding it, his faith was assured, "that, while the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease." And, in millions of hearts since, the sight of that bow has awakened the grateful associations which were formed by it in the breast of Noah, and led them to call one to another, with the son of Sirach, "Look upon the rainbow, and praise Him that made it. Very beautiful it is in the brightness thereof. It compasseth the heavens about with a glorious circle, and the hands of the Most High have bended it." Homer speaks of the rainbow as though he had been familiar with the thought of Noah, —

"Jove's wondrous bow of three celestial dyes,  
Placed as a *sign* to man amid the skies."

In the confidence inspired by this "sign," Noah began again the labors of the field; and, among other things, unfortunately (as the sequel proves) planted a vineyard. The vineyard grew, and bore fruit; and of the fruit Noah made wine, and of the wine he drank, and under its intoxicating influence fell asleep. On awaking, he discovered that his condition had been a matter of ridicule to one of his sons, whilst in the other two it had produced only shame and sorrow. Whereupon he pronounced a curse upon Canaan, and benedictions upon Shem and Japheth. But why curse *Canaan*, an offending grandchild, son of Ham, instead of the real offender, Ham himself? And what did his curse amount to? What power had he to determine that the children of one son should be subject to those of another? He had no such power; and the curse of this disgraced man was as impotent as it was unbecoming. It has been common to regard it as having all the authority of a kingly edict or of an inspired prophecy, as though God had delegated to him, while in a fit of passion, power to see and fix the various destiny of his offspring! No such thing. He had no such power; and, if the fortune of the descendants of Ham was less favored than that of the children of his brothers, — of which we see no evidence, but quite the

contrary, — we may rest assured, that the angry curse of Noah had nothing to do with it. This curse, with the occasion of it, leaves a blot upon the otherwise stainless name of the father of the new world, and makes us almost wish that no record of it had been preserved. We add only, that Noah survived the deluge three hundred and fifty years; having lived long enough to see his descendants greatly multiplied and spread abroad, and dying at the age of nine hundred and fifty, — an example of longevity never but in one instance exceeded. In a future number we may trace the fortunes of some of his immediate posterity. Meanwhile let us devoutly and reverently contemplate the wisdom and care of the Almighty Providence which watched over the cradle of our race; and if, through the memorials which have been handed down to us, we are able to trace our lineage to Noah and to Adam, let us not rejoice so much that we are their offspring, as that, through them, we are the children of God. And wherein we see them failing through weakness, and yielding the purity and dignity of their nature to temptation, let us arm ourselves with the strength that cometh from above, and be imitators, not of their folly and transgression, but of their faith, and the simplicity and righteousness of their best days.

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#### REMARKS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS.

THE Epistle to the Galatians is probably the oldest of Paul's writings that have come down to us. The reasons for this opinion are the following: —

The account, which Paul gives of himself in this epistle, mentions only two visits to Jerusalem; whereas three visits are recorded in the Acts, before the one in which he was apprehended. As the subject of which the apostle treats in the epistle requires him to particularize all his conferences with the chief of the apostles, it may safely be inferred that the letter to the Galatians was written before the visit recorded in the fifteenth chapter of Acts. Besides, the third visit is for the express purpose of settling the very question which is the theme of the

epistle. How does it happen that no notice is taken in the letter of the deliberation and decree recorded in Acts xv. ? Had the council met before Paul wrote to Galatia, it seems hardly possible that he should have made no allusion to the apostles' decree.

We find Paul forced to argue the point at issue, as a subject on which there were different opinions; and concerning which he, as an "apostle not from men, nor by an individual, but by Jesus the Messiah and God the Father," had as much right to speak authoritatively as any at Jerusalem. We find him in his argument availing himself of circumstances trifling in comparison with the decision of the council; which circumstances go to prove that the visits referred to in the epistle and the visit recorded in Acts xv. were different.

The epistle states, that, at Paul's first visit, he saw Peter, and no other of the apostles, except James, the Lord's relative. Why is James thus designated? Peter, after his escape from prison, says, "Go, show these things to James and the brethren." Paul also, in the account he gives of his second visit in Galatians, chap. ii. names James without any further description. How is this to be accounted for, unless on the supposition that Paul's first visit was during the lifetime of James the elder; and his second, that recorded in Acts xi.; about which time James the elder was put to death? If Paul's first visit had been the one recorded in Acts xi. and his second that related in Acts xv., then both visits would have been after the elder James's death, and there would have been no need of any distinction besides the name. The fact that James junior required to be specified proves that the brother of John was alive when Paul came to Jerusalem for the first time after his conversion.

Again, the account which Paul gives of his second visit, and that given in Acts xv., do not harmonize. In the epistle, Paul says that he went up by revelation; in Acts, after no small dissension and disputation, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain other of them should go up to the apostles and elders about this question. Paul says that his conference was in private; the meeting of the council was public. In the epistle, all the apostles seem to be of a different opinion from Paul; at the council, they are all agreed. When Peter came to Antioch, Paul withstood him; at the council, Peter speaks in favor of the Gentiles. All these circumstances go to prove that two visits were

intended; and that the one to which the epistle refers as Paul's second is not the one at which the council was held. Further, after the council, would an attempt be made to compel Titus to be circumcised? Or, if this be admitted, would Paul have deemed this circumstance worthy of notice, when he had the decree of the council to sustain the position which he takes throughout the epistle?

These considerations, thus briefly stated, lead to the conclusion that the Epistle to the Galatians was written before the council at Jerusalem, — a conclusion which few who have written upon the subject have arrived at, but which cannot well be avoided, if due weight be given to the evidence. It is, however, worthy of notice, that Michaelis, who assigns the date after the council, maintains that Galatians is the oldest of Paul's epistles.

If the result arrived at be true, it does much to illustrate the meaning of some passages in the letter under consideration. "Tertullian ascribes Paul's zeal against Judaism to the recentness of his conversion, and to his want of that experience, by which he afterwards learnt to become a Jew to the Jews, as well as a Greek to the Greeks." Without agreeing with this opinion, it must be apparent to every student of the epistle, that it bears marks of haste; that Paul feared his claim as an apostle might not be generally acknowledged; and that his visit to Arabia, as well as the two he had made to Jerusalem, were fresh in his mind. No chronologist assigns a less time for these transactions than four years; and some maintain that the time to which Paul refers in the second chapter of Galatians was seventeen years after his conversion. If we assume either of these dates, the apostle must have been at least thirty-four years old at the time of which he speaks, and more than forty when he wrote to the Galatians.

The great question which disturbed the peace of the church, in the apostolic age, had been agitated in Galatia. Paul's converts, who had received his message with gladness, were confused by the doctrines of men who wished to be both Jews and Christians, and who taught that a convert must be initiated into Judaism before he could become a Christian. If it was objected by the Galatian that Paul did not so teach, it was answered that Paul was in the minority, and moreover was not one of the eleven, and hardly worthy to be called an apostle.

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vindicates his authority and the power of the Christian faith, and endeavors, by argument suited to produce conviction, to stop this controversy at its commencement.

In order to obtain a favorable hearing, it was necessary for him to establish his claim to the office he held. Hence he begins with declaring that no body of men nor any individual made, him an apostle, but Christ and God. He then expresses his astonishment that his converts had so soon departed from the faith. He denounces in the strongest terms those who would thus pervert the gospel, and again declares, "The gospel preached by me is not from man, nor from men, nor was I taught it but by revelation." To confirm this statement, he gives an account of his intercourse with the apostles, the number of times he had been to Jerusalem, and whom he saw there; and how that they, the chief apostles, taught him nothing, and imposed no new doctrine for him to teach, but proved their approbation of his course by giving him the right hand of fellowship. As a further vindication of his equality with the apostles, he narrates how he withstood Peter; and thus comes to the subject of the epistle. Peter and himself, Paul asserts, agree in denying the efficacy of the Jewish law as a means of divine acceptance, although they were both Jews. If, in this denial, they are sincere, then to return again to the law is to acknowledge that they had erred. "If we are convicted of sin for seeking acceptance by Christ, then Christ is a minister to sin." "If there be acceptance by the law, then Christ died in vain." He proceeds, "O foolish Galatians! before whose eyes Jesus Christ, crucified for you, was so plainly depicted, who has seduced you from obedience to the truth? Did he who bestowed the spirit upon you, and worked miracles among you, do thus from performance of a law, or from obedience to faith? As Abraham, he believed God, and this made him acceptable. Know ye that the faithful are the sons of Abraham? The Scripture, foreseeing that God would accept the nations by faith, proclaimed the glad tidings to Abraham, 'that in thee shall all nations be blessed.' So that they of faith are blessed with Abraham, who had faith. As many as stand in support of a law are under a curse. For it is written, 'Cursed is every one who continueth not to do all the precepts in the book of the law.' That by the law no one is accepted by God is manifest, 'for the accepted shall be saved by faith.' The law, however, is not of faith, but 'he who doeth

these things shall be saved by them.' Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us; for it is written, 'Every one hanged on a tree is cursed,' that the blessing of Abraham to the nations might be by Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the spirit through faith."

The apostle then maintains that the compact between God and Abraham cannot be broken by a subsequent law. Besides, the promise is not to his offsprings, as to many, but as to one, and to thy offspring, which is Christ. Furthermore, it is a promise, gratuitously made, and therefore being born a Jew gives no claim to it. Why, then, the law? It was introduced through the ministration of angels, by the presence of a mediator, because of transgression. There is no mediator of one, but God is one. The law recognizes two parties, but God who made the promise is only one. Hence, to be accepted as a Jew, you must comply with your part of the covenant, and keep every iota of the law. Christianity is more merciful. The law shut us Jews up, like children in a school, secluded from the rest of the world. When faith came, we were no longer under a schoolmaster. For, through faith in Jesus Christ, ye are all sons of God, inasmuch as whoever of you were baptized into Christ are covered entirely with Christ. There is no Jew nor Greek; there is no slave nor freeman; there is no male nor female: ye are one in Christ Jesus.

Even if a Jew claim from Abraham, he is under wardship, only an infant, until, educated by Jesus Christ, he learns his privileges, and fears not, like a loving son, to say, "My Father."

As confirmation of what has been said, there is a passage in the Scriptures so written as to contain an allegory. Abraham had two sons; one by a slave, the other by a free woman. These women are two covenants. One, from Mount Sinai, bearing children to bondage, that is Hagar; for Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and ranks with the present Jerusalem, and is in servitude with her children. But the Jerusalem to come is the free woman, who is the mother of us all. We brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise. But, as the natural son used to tease the supernatural, so is it now. Yet what says Scripture? "Cast out the slave with her son; for the son of the slave shall not inherit with the son of the free." Brethren, ye are not children of the slave, but of the free. Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free.

In this way, Paul argues for Christianity as a universal religion. At a time when the other apostles were undecided, the apostle for all nations stands forth a fearless advocate of the spirit of Christian liberty. The error against which he contended was subversive of Christianity. As the law would be an incumbrance, and would prevent the gospel from becoming a religion for all mankind, it would change its whole character. It would be substituting another gospel. It was making it a mere offshoot from Judaism, and went far to destroy its divine authority.

The moral consequences were ruinous. The notions then prevalent with regard to the law related only, or chiefly, to the ceremonial part of it. Very little benefit could be derived from this observance. We have a proof that this was what the Jews of that time understood by the law, from what Paul says of himself, Phil. iii. 6; a declaration, which he certainly would not have made, that he was blameless, if it regarded morals. The same is illustrated in Justin Martyr's dialogue with Trypho.

Not only did the Jews oppose the law to Christianity on the ground that they should obtain divine acceptance as being descendants of Abraham, which, if believed, required the performance of the whole law, or else they were under a curse; but there were many time-servers among professors of Christianity, who hoped to screen themselves from Roman persecution by claiming to be Jews. This epistle is proof of the fearless independence of Paul in so boldly coming forward, in opposition to the prevailing sentiment, an advocate for the universality of Christianity. How much after-generations are indebted to him for this, it is impossible to determine. He who could say, "I am marked in my body as a slave of Christ," would not be enslaved by the weak and poor principles of the times. He who could so earnestly and yet so affectionately rebuke the Galatians cannot be accused of being a temporizer.

W. A. W.

## A WINTER SABBATH WALK.

It is a lovely sabbath afternoon in the depth of winter. Our hearts have been soothed and elevated by the holy services of the sanctuary. The exhortation has come to us with power, "Quench not the Spirit;" and we have lifted up the earnest prayer that its holy flame may never become cold and dim within us. Now let us go forth into the solitude of nature, and "hear what the Spirit saith" from the pure heavens above and the dazzling fields below. We will not walk through the streets, silent though they be; but will seek our favorite summer haunt. We must strike out a path for ourselves; for our well-guarded feet are the first to tread the unsullied snow, which enshrouds field and hill behind the peaceful village. We pass over the unbroken level field, we toil up the ascent with an exertion which brings expansion to our lungs, and roses to our cheeks. Now we have gained the great iron highway, which links us with many a populous town and city, and brings us near to many a cherished friend, once far removed by weary miles of travel. One day in seven, we may freely walk here; for the mighty avenue is silent now, and the iron monster rests from his labors. Through the bosom of the "everlasting hills" this way has been cut; and while it has invaded the sanctity of nature, and in some respects impaired her beauty, in others it has but heightened her charms. Before us and behind, through the long narrow vista of the road, are seen mountains blue in the distance. On the one side rise above us finely wooded hills, sometimes cleft by dark ravines, where the voice of God makes low, solemn music among the pines. Below us, on the other hand, lies the quiet village, seen at intervals as we emerge from behind the frequent walls of earth, which remain where the road was sunk into the hills. When the swift train rushes by, its thundering sound now imprisoned behind these walls, now bursting through in the open space, its voice is so like the swelling and dying away of the waves on the sea-shore, that those of the villagers, to whom the ocean is a dear and familiar friend, feel their hearts thrill at the resemblance to its measured roar.

But let us look again at the village. There it lies, embosomed

in its amphitheatre of hills, looking as if neither sin nor sorrow could find entrance within its bounds. In summer it is almost concealed from view by its embowering trees. The scene is greatly changed since we last took this our sabbath walk. The latest flowers then were scarcely withered on their stems; and, a few weeks before that time, the woods were dressed in all the splendors which precede their desolation. And by the way-side the aster and the golden rod "in autumn beauty stood." Now the dark forms of the evergreens are in striking contrast with the pure new-fallen snow.

And now in the distance we catch our first glimpse of the village cemetery, usually the limit of our walk. One by one, beyond the intervening evergreens, appear the white slabs, and the more conspicuous monuments, which mark the earthly resting-places of our friends. Let us enter the gate, and pass reverently, but not mournfully, over the ground, which no human foot has trodden since it received its last mantle of snow. It is indeed a lovely spot, even amid the desolation of winter. It is silent now, silent as the grave itself; but in the summer season the song of the birds, the ripple of the mountain rivulet, and the softened hum which rises from the village, combine with the loveliness of hill and vale to make it a cheerful spot. To me there is an indefinable attraction about the burial-place even of strangers, unless it be wholly desolate and dreary. Nothing of gloom or terror lingers round it; but it brings a pensiveness, and still an elevation, to the spirit, akin to that which breathes in the chastened beauty of a moonlight night.

But here we are not among strangers; for the names inscribed on the stones around us call up vividly before our minds many a form long familiar to our eyes. The charitable deeds of one, and the patient endurance of another, the loveliness of childhood, and the Christian cheerfulness of age, speak to us, not so much from the sod beneath as from the illimitable space above and around us, where their spirits may now be free to range. Our thoughts dwell not with that which was buried beneath the ground; for to us these humble graves speak not of decay and death, but of "the life immortal." To how many a stricken heart have they made that life real, and that unseen world near at hand, as it could not have been but for the passage of some familiar friend through the mysterious portal which we call death!



Here let us pause beside this little mound, raised above the cherub-form of a pure infant. The children of our company endeavor with their small hands to remove the snow, that they may discover whether the flowers we last laid there still remain beneath. To them the grave has no terrors, nothing of gloom. It has been a joy to them to scatter fresh flowers upon it. They have questioned their mother by the way anew of their angel sister, "whom having not seen they love;" and her gentle being is a bright link between them and the spirit-land, an earnest of the life beyond the tomb.

Now approach with me this simple monument, which, pointing heavenward, seems with silent eloquence to direct our thoughts above. It bears a name enshrined among the sacred memories of many hearts, — the name of the youthful pastor, who, for a few brief weeks, walked among his people, "and was not, for God took him." Here repose his ashes in this lovely spot, where he once said in the fulness of his admiration, "One would be almost willing to die, that he might be laid in the midst of so much beauty." Standing beside his grave, we may look down on the valley he so dearly loved, where he found "religion in the beauty of the meadows." From this grave also beams the strong light of immortality; for it cannot be that so much promise has failed of its fulfilment. A ministry so earnestly begun must have its consummation, though our eyes discern it not. Walks he not still among the people of his choice? Why should we not believe that —

"Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth unseen,  
Both when we wake and when we sleep"?

Why should we not feel ourselves surrounded and sanctified by the presence of those, who, if they loved us once, must love us now, "with a love stronger than death"? Earth grows holier when we regard it as thus intimately connected with the heavenly state. Oh that we might ever walk as beings "compassed about with a cloud of witnesses," who survey not only our outward acts, but our inward thoughts and emotions! How would our souls be elevated and soothed by the conviction that we were daily walking in such society! As the spirit of the Infinite Father pervades all space, as the blessed Son is ever ready to visit the waiting soul, so may those who have become all spirit be permitted often

to revisit us dwellers on the earth; if, indeed, they be not ever around us, ministers of God to our souls.

There are many others of these lowly beds, by which we might linger, and muse on the earthly lot of those whose mortal remains sleep below. Not forgotten are they by those who laid them here; for, in the summer season, the blossoming plants and the fresh flowers strewed above their heads are silent witnesses to "the love that will not die," but will gain new strength and purity through the bright ages of eternity.

But let us come down from "the mount of vision." A holy air breathes over the spot. It has breathed also on our souls, and we shall retrace our steps with hearts elevated and refreshed by this communion with nature and the spirit-world. M. W.

#### THE WITNESSING SPIRIT.

A THOUGHT is something real. Unto eyes  
 Angelic, unto ours, one day, when flesh  
 Shall cease to prison up the spirit-sense,  
 The things of faith may be the things of sight.  
 The Holy Ghost, in dove-like form, came down  
 On His pure head, who, by the Jordan's bank,  
 Received its waters in baptismal rite.  
 Like tongues of fire it came, with inspiration,  
 Unto the Preachers of the Christian faith.  
 And *every* thought God sends into the soul  
 Is a reality, though unexpressed  
 In outward form. He saith unto his angel,  
 "Go!" and he goeth. So, in dreams, he warned  
 The men of olden time. So now He speaks,  
 With inward voices, to each child of man.  
 And when, in prayer, *our* thought ascends again  
 Unto its Source, a something doth depart  
 Out from the spirit. 'Wings invisible  
 Carry it upward, in a form of love,  
 Unto His Throne. It stands an angel there,  
 And pleads for us.

It is not all delusion,  
 When, in the Sacrament, the Romanist  
 Eateth the body and the blood of Christ.

Something from him, the Saviour, doth come down  
 Into believing souls, as when, of old,  
 Virtue went out of him, and healed the plague  
 Of her who touched his garment.

Dost thou yearn,  
 O lonely soul ! after the loved and parted ?  
 Is there a word you long to whisper them ?  
 Some pleading for forgiveness, some assurance  
 Of an affection spanning the dark gulf  
 That death has made ? That word is heard in heaven !  
 That loving thought hath flown from out thy heart  
 Straight to an angel-bosom ! This dim world  
 Is not all shut from glimpses of the heaven  
 That lies beyond it. Nearer than we dream,  
 Ofttimes, are spirit-messengers. The lines  
 Electric, which man weaves about the earth  
 To talk with, do but feebly shadow forth  
 How the wide universe of spirit-life  
 Stands linked through infinite distances. Whate'er  
 Thou whisperest in the closet shall be heard  
 As though 'twere shouted from the housetop.

Space  
 Hath nought to do with spirit. Even here,  
 A thought, before it is expressed, shall find  
 Echo in kindred spirits. Mysteries  
 Of warning, sympathy, strange intuition,  
 Fill up our life with wonders.

“ Heaven lies  
 About us in our infancy,” — and ever !  
 “ A cloud of witnesses doth compass us,”  
 And angel-voices whisper to the heart,  
 Amid the din of business. Christ himself  
 Is the Messiah still to every soul  
 He died to save ! Oh ! mightier is the power  
 That draws us upward than that drags us down !  
 Cast aside self ! Open the spirit-eyes  
 Of love and faith, and heaven shall stand revealed,  
 And thou shalt grow in likeness to the angels.  
 So shall thy “ conversation be in heaven ; ”  
 So shalt thou die to earth, and rise with Christ ;  
 So shall thy “ life be hid with him in God ! ”

## EXPENSE OF TIME.

## A NEW YEAR'S MEDITATION.

WHILE the shade of sadness, brought on by the departure of the old year, lingers about the heart; before the mirth and gayety, which the freshness of the new inspires, shall be stamped with the signet of overt folly; before the memory of the one, and the anticipations of the other, shall have gone to one common grave, let us appropriate a few moments to some thought on the expenditure of time.

Should we refuse to listen to plausible proposals of aggrandizement? Were it unwise, then, to search diligently for the means of gaining or saving time?

Life is justly allowed by all to be the most precious of our possessions, while we yet commit a practical paradox, and spend time, of which life is composed, as though of all things it were of least worth.

The existence of property among men has given rise to registries of its transfers; and, in the transactions of business, the practice of keeping faithful and accurate accounts is deemed indispensably necessary. Thus these accounts become not only the evidences of expenditure, but the records of the value of whatever may have been bought or sold. By referring to them, the relative value of commodities at different times, as well as the value of such commodities in our own estimation, may be determined.

This system of keeping accounts has become, by its direct and indirect operation, an efficient support to the existing organization of the social fabric. By its instrumentality, clearness and precision have been given to the distinctions to be made between *meum* and *tuum*; and that order and security introduced, under the protection of which, men dwelling at antipodes negotiate and execute with each other in perfect confidence.

By this means, men in civilized life are enabled to hold property for themselves and their assigns, with that title which gives them credit among their fellows; while, under the ruder elements of the savage state, the only guaranty to possession lies in that

personal prowess, which, when it sleeps, is ever pillowed upon arms, and which avenges with blood all predatory aggression.

Again, property being the means of subsistence, men are prone to regard it as of paramount importance. As they enter upon life, they find all about them eagerly engaged in its acquisition. From the earliest years of infancy, they are taught, in every variety of manner, its worth; and this not so much with the view of its intrinsic value in making it the engine of their own or others' happiness, as to nurse the love of acquisition; since they frequently go on to acquire, long after they have lost the power to enjoy. To awaken an appetency for it, the mind is futilized with "precept upon precept, line upon line." Maxims in verse, and proverbs in prose, are inculcated "in the house and by the way, on sitting down and rising up;" and these are enforced and re-enforced by the omnipotent practical illustration of parental example. Small sums are placed at the disposal of the young, with which to exercise their sagacity in negotiating, or their parsimony in hoarding.

Thus has the love of gain been engrafted on every principle in man's mental and physical constitution, until, intertwined and interwoven, it has become part of his being. But, in illustrating this fact thus strongly, no disparagement is intended to its utility, so far forth as is compatible with other grave and weighty obligations. The so-called homely virtues, prudence, economy, thrift, and industry are praiseworthy and commendable. They are so when employed in procuring an honorable subsistence; they are doubly so when considered as taking hold on those principles which lie at the foundation of whatever is valuable in man. For "he who is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much;" and he who scrupulously sees to it that nothing, however small, is suffered to perish, is also alive to the value of all excellence and worth, whether in sentiment, feeling, or action.

We are not of the number of those who disdain to eat bread by the sweat of the brow, or who despise the earnings which proceed from industry in any honest calling. We have more of pity than of envy or respect for him who has, through indolence or pride, spurned labor; — labor, the only special gift to man when the great seal of Heaven was fixed upon the grant which made this earth his heritage! We feel sincere compassion for the man so far removed from the sweet sources of human sympathy as not

to know the means, if thrown on his individual resources, by which to obtain his daily bread.

It is, then, neither to the man who limits his exertions to the bare sordid acquisition of wealth, nor yet to him who has been taught to despise all industrious occupation, to whom we are to look as models of excellence.

It is rather to him who rightly values time, and who makes it the standard of value; who regards the man that wantonly deprives him of it as justly amenable to the civil tribunal for criminal misdemeanor, robbing him of that which he cannot return, and squandering that which it is beyond his power to collect; with whom moments are of infinite value, not so much for the amount of money that may be acquired within a given number of them, but as being separate portions of his existence, each one of which is a material item in the precious gift of fleeting life.

And are there any who do not thus appreciate life? who regard it as a season of successive toil and sorrow? who inquire, Why this solicitude about a few moments? why make us wretched with the thought that we may not enjoy in oblivious mirth the few hours we redeem from labor and care? To such we would say, Have you never felt a yearning for the infinite, the perfect, the right, the true, the good, and the beautiful? — never felt the distress attending a state of uncertainty, nor aspired for more copious supplies of knowledge? Has the beauty of nature never dawned upon you, and have you explored her hidden chambers? Has the wisdom of man, through sixty centuries, found nothing you ought to desire to know, either in his language, his literature, or his art? Has the world furnished no specimens of character, of which you are ignorant? Does nothing remain undone in the cause of human progress and improvement? Are there no institutions of tyranny and oppression to be broken down; no vicious to be reclaimed; no suffering to relieve; no ignorant to be enlightened; no passions or habits to be guarded or controlled? Are there no attributes in the Creator to adore?

We have seen that men, in the lapse of time, have grown wise in the modes of acquiring and securing the property which will augment their temporal aggrandizement. It yet remains to be learned, that the true standard of value is to be found only in Time; that this is the only purchase-money of knowledge,

worth, character; and that wealth is a mere adventitious circumstance.

Let that wisdom which has been applied to the acquisition of wealth be applied to the saving of time. Let accounts be kept of its expense. When such a record is kept, how will stand the items for a single day? To frivolous thought and idle conversation how much? to gossip how much? to slander, disputings, detraction, and crimination, how much? To charity, good-will, self-government, and self-improvement, how much?

May we not hope that man's destiny is as yet scarcely contemplated? In the increased attention given to education, and in the manifold benevolent institutions of the day, is there not to be discovered the gleaming of that light, which, radiated from the mountain-tops, shall be suffused amid the thickest gloom, and pour its gladness into every vale, — the dawn of that time when man shall have applied that order and assiduity in the husbandry of time which is now employed in amassing wealth? When this is united to a wise discrimination, which appropriates no moment but to a noble object, then will it be seen, that length of life is not so much in the number of its years, nor happiness in the abundance of earthly treasure.

"Oh! take no note of time  
But from its loss: to give it, then, a tongue  
Is wise in man. As if an angel spoke,  
I feel the solemn sound. If heard aright,  
It is the knell of my departed hours; —  
It is the signal that demands despatch."

D. S. N.

## SABBATH COMMUNINGS.

November 10, 1850.

COULD I only be in your quiet shaded church this morning, amid the silent worshippers, with your voice, my kind friend, to read the lesson for to-day, and your thought to be my interpreter thereof! Yet would I choose my own text, and, bowing as I do beneath its solemn import, pray you, with all the earnestness of a devout Catholic, to become my Fenelon, — my father-confessor, and shrive me from my sins; or, as we Protestants (with less



living faith, I fear) should express it, help me to the renunciation of my sins, that they may be remitted at a higher confessional.

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven; whose sin is covered." Ps. xxxii. 1.

"After this manner *therefore* pray ye, Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors; for, if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will likewise forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses," &c.

I long for you, or any one who practically can understand it, to expound for me this mystery of the kingdom of heaven, — Christian forgiveness. Its seeming impossibility has of late afflicted me, shutting out from my soul the blessed conviction of God's all-pardoning love. One of those midnight thunder-peals, last week, woke to startling remembrance the fearful line of my child-conned hymn, —

"*Forgive!*" a voice of thunder spoke, "or never be forgiven!"

The pardon which we seek from our Father is so vast a thing! We want, in the full consciousness of our disobedience, his perfect redeeming *love*, his benignant presence, his smile of blessing upon all our ways. But the pardon which we grant to his children is so small and poor! We wish them, perchance, no harm, make charitable allowance for their faults, pity, and as we persuade ourselves, forgive them. But we would have "no dealings with the Samaritans:" in proportion as they offend us, must they be unto us as heathen men and publicans. This is the exposition which many of the most gentle and kindly render, and even so high as this it is often difficult to attain. When meanness and usury, unblushing deceit or open treason, present themselves in any way before us, does it not seem good that the anger, the detestation, which so spontaneously arises, should be nourished, and bring forth its required fruit? Does it not seem, for the time, like doing harsh violence to our better nature, — the mere endeavor to repress it? We would call down fire from heaven to consume such iniquity, and deem that our God needs such zealous service from us.

Must, then, this righteous anger become of no avail? Must this sense of justice, which seeks for redress in some expiation of sin, be wholly denied? Are we to cast away this spirit-sword, by which we visit retribution upon offenders, by which we think to

guard ourselves, and all we hold dear, from harm? And yet, and yet, how true it is that this same weapon cometh near to slay our own souls! Looking upon the sinner as well as the sin with shrinking horror or angry contempt, how can we appropriate to ourselves the slightest indulgence from the infinite purity of Heaven? When we see just and holy laws outraged, the poor and weak oppressed, God's general bounty made of no avail; when we feel how *we* must be moved to deal with such transgression, and then find ourselves in grievous temptation, stumbling perhaps in the same paths; alas! where is our hope, trust, faith? We are turned from that face of Love which shineth as the sun upon the evil and the good, and deem the while that with frowning displeasure it has turned from us. So dark it seems, with our own transgressions and our brother's unforgiven offence upon our souls, that we see not the ever-shining light, and fear to lift up our voices for the ever-ready pardon. If we forgive not men their trespasses, neither *will* our heavenly Father forgive our trespasses. There is no open door through which his pardoning love can enter and renew our souls.

Evening.

Did you not really preach to me from my chosen text this morning? I half believe so; for, as I wrote, the mystery seemed to clear, and the blessed beauty, the consolation of our Saviour's precept and example dawned through my darkness; even as the tender blue of this sabbath sky, melting all day the clouds with which November would have veiled it, has at length beamed down upon and breathed its silent peace around us. The setting sun has irradiated mountain-top and hill and valley, distant hamlets and churches, with a rosy summer glow, and left its never-failing promise for "the evil and the good," as if it were celestial music borne upon its parting beams!

I remember now a gentle dream, — a vision of a self-forgetting, loveful child, embracing with joy his wayward and morose companion; and with that comes the *promise*-line of the echoing hymn, —

"Forgive," a blessed voice replied, "and *thou shalt be forgiven.*"

ANNIE F.

## A BAPTISMAL HYMN.

PURE as the lily's bud,  
 Unsullied as the morn,  
 Just from the bosom of our God,  
 A child to us is born.

Dwelling of purity!  
 Soon through each open door  
 Our anxious hearts and eyes must see  
 Earth's tidal influence pour.

Now be thou consecrate,  
 By sacred song and prayer,  
 Temple of life, immaculate,  
 To God's most holy care!

Where Christ doth enter in,  
 No harm, no ill, can come:  
 Now, Saviour, bar the gates of sin,  
 And make this house thy home.

D.

## LACONICS.

## I.

WE are impatient for results. God works too slowly for short-sighted man. Step by step the preparatory movement takes; and when "the fulness of time" comes, a Christ is born. Men look at the result, and would blot out the intermediate processes which gives this result all its crowning glory. We needed Moses before Christ, the Jewish before the Christian dispensation.

## II.

People talk about *special judgments*. In truth, there is no such thing. A long succession of circumstances go before, and we are blindfolded to their issues; and, when the consequences

follow, we term them *special visitations* from Heaven. Wars are preceded by feuds, intemperance by previous indulgence, and even the *cholera* is only the result of some broken sanitary laws which we are too ignorant to discover.

## III.

The dew fertilizes the flower; the heavy rain causes it to droop; but at this very moment it is strengthening the root which sends its vitality to the branches, and causes them to withstand the severest storms. So "light afflictions," properly used, give a strength to the Christian graces; and when heavier sorrows beat upon us, that previous strength is needed for the exigency; we droop, but to rise; and the Christian graces, fertilized by afflictions, are thus fitting us to be transplanted into that heavenly nursery, where a more congenial climate shall continually lead us to progress without interruption or end.

## IV.

Empty rooms proclaim the mutability of all earthly friendships. It will not soothe the lonely mourner to tell him "all change is for the better," that our friends have made a happy exchange. He feels *present ties* are broken, and the idea of what he must pass through before he reaches the departed makes him shudder. Only the still small voice, "I will be with thee through the dark valley," meets his desolation. He needs the oil of sympathy to heal his wounded spirit.

## V.

Music is better than wine to invigorate the spirits. Luther, in his desponding moments, used to take the flute and revive his sinking spirits, remarking, "The devil hates good music." Are you irritated? Are you dull, wearied, care-worn? Try the piano, violin, flute, or accordion, — any thing that will send forth a sweet sound; you will soon feel its power.

## VI.

What *must* be done *will* be done. Dr. Johnson says, when he began to publish his paper, he was at a loss what to name it. He sat down by his bedside, and resolved he would not sleep till he had done so. "The Rambler" seemed to be the best that occurred, and he took it. The best time to form good resolutions is at night, when we have been reviewing the actions of the day. Renew them in the morning, and it may be you will *act on them* before another twilight.

H. S. E.

## EDITOR'S COLLECTANEA. — No. XVII.

*Richard Edney and the Governor's Family.* Boston: Phillips, Sampson, and Co. 1850.

THE judgment, on laying down this volume, is, — It has neither so masterly a power nor so glaring defects as "Margaret;" the scope is less, — the execution far more perfect; the points of brilliancy are less intense, but a calmer and richer lustre is spread over the whole field; the deep breaths of inspiration are less frequent, but the contortions are mitigated in a greater than corresponding ratio; the reader admires the book a little less, but he both respects and loves the author more.

Not supposing ourselves liable to any special surprises at the eccentricities of genius, claiming to have met with some productions having that origin, and not questioning that genius has left its unmistakable marks on "Margaret" and "Philo," we were never able to persuade ourselves that certain oddities in these writings are fairly traceable to such a source. Indeed, — and what we are about to say of the new work will justify us in candidly confessing so much respecting the other two, — there are passages in both of these that look a little as if they were written in a state of luxurious, if not maudlin, defiance of the classical standards of composition, and would suggest, to a stranger, associations with lunacy, champagne, or conceit, rather than with those habits of mental and moral health which are known by all his acquaintances pre-eminently to distinguish our brother at Augusta. If any criticisms upon him have appeared harsh, he must remember that whatever faults may belong to him as a writer are peculiarly provoking, on account of the singular excellence which they mar. It vexes the temper to see a man of ideas moving on the very confines of the highest order of greatness, yet persistently refusing himself admittance by some paltry foible.

In "Richard Edney," an honest, frank, sensible, upright, kind-hearted, and religious young mechanic comes down from his country-home, through a magnificent snow-storm capitably described, to a manufacturing and lumbering city called Woodylin. He goes to live in his sister's family, goes to work in the saw-mills,

goes to church, to conference-meetings, to parties, to picnics, to bookstores, to hovels of neglect and dens of wretchedness and sin, into the common council, and to the governor's fireside. He goes wherever a strong will, an industrious hand, a generous heart, and a devout purpose, would be likely to carry him. And wherever he goes, he leaves his mark. About the progressive fortunes of this young man, the central figure of the whole, are grouped such vivid portraiture of character, such life-like narratives, such striking descriptions, such lively colloquies, such shrewd practical maxims, such lofty spiritual thoughts, such expanded views of the great advance and hopes of humanity, with such tender, delicate, ethereal gleams of graceful sentiment, as together form one of the most readable and memorable books of the age. The young Richard proves not only an intelligent laborer, but a modest reformer; not ambitiously pushing his way into public notice, but only seizing firmly on the natural order of incidents in his every-day life, to improve society and ennoble himself. With a heart naturally gentle, and refined by Christian culture, with something noble in his plain manners, as well as handsome in his sunburnt face,—he shows what may now-a-days, and in America, be expected of a young man,—as "Margaret" had "shown what may be done by a young woman."

Knowing that fastidious persons have been rendered suspicious of Mr. Judd's writings by a propensity he has sometimes shown to corrupt his English with outlandish words, we have taken some pains to keep a list, in reading "Richard Edney," of all the exceedingly odd terms occurring in it. We assure our readers, in good faith, that, with the exception of a single instance where the use of a newly-coined noun is justified by a pleasant apology, there are exactly fifteen sins of this sort, in a volume of four hundred and sixty-eight pages; and, of these fifteen words, all except two are to be found in Webster's Dictionary, though several of them are marked there as obsolete. The very worst of these are "Ogganition," "Suaviloquy," "Yex," "fescue," and "chowtered."

There is one chapter on "Phumbics," entitled "A chapter that ought perhaps to have been omitted," respecting which it is much to be regretted the wise second thought did not prevail. As a travesty on political parties, it is clever enough; but its humor is more than outweighed by the awkwardness of its position. The difficulty is, that, being a piece of broad and manifest caricature, its sudden introduction into one of the most exact and faithful

pictures of actual life ever drawn,—its organic introduction, too, as a part of the web of the real history, with subsequent allusions,—is out of taste, contrary to the laws of art, and a violence to all propriety. Shall we say privately to the author, that the fiftieth chapter also is far from being one of the best,—the blasphemy it brings to light being rather too shocking, and the catastrophe not so naturally managed as the rest of the story?

Mr. Judd is a poet, a dramatist, a reformer, and a preacher, all in one. His vision is at once expanded and searching,—comprehensive in its survey, and correct in its report of the particulars. His philanthropy, always conspicuous and sincere, is a Christianized philanthropy. His moral purpose is often held in a modest reserve, but it never vanishes; and even where it is not present by a formal appeal, it pervades, like a subtle essence, the dialogue or the narration. If his subordinate characters are not always quite distinctly enough marked, they are always fresh, bright, and true, so far as they are represented. If commonplace personages are sometimes made to discourse a little too learnedly, (Miss "Plumy Alicia Eyre" should never have been allowed to say, "Then there is love. O burden, unreacting fatality, organic sigh, of woman!") yet the incongruity is more than atoned for by the absence of that hackneyed pomp of style and conventionality of circumstance which so often vitiate the literature of the imagination. There is not a stupid page in the entire book. And probably no writer could say with a deeper honesty than this one, to his several productions, "You all originate, on the part of your author, in a single desire to glorify God and bless his fellow-men."

"Richard Edney" is not what is called a religious novel; and yet vital religion is in every part of it. There is no protruding of any philosophical system which the book is written to establish; but the whole is charged with a philosophy of a very pure and lofty tone. If we do not find much brilliancy of wit or many sustained flights of eloquence in the conversations, we do find the constant play of a lively fancy, genuine feeling, and earnest wisdom. If there is no complacent pretence of prophetic knowledge, as in many of the ambitious fictions of the day which profess to interpret the age and foresee the future, there is always a hopeful, trustful, progressive spirit, peering pleasantly out in all the windings of incidents, situations of the characters, and the quiet but forcible comments of the narrator. On the whole, we can think of no person, on any grade of life, to whom the book would not be an appropriate gift, and a minister of good. For it is—as the title-



page says, though the title-page should not have said it — "simple and popular, yet cultured and noble."

Our author has earned, and occupies, no mean position in American literature. By the qualities of spirituality, humanity, and insight into truth, he leaves far behind him the decent tribe of Coopers, Simses, Pauldings, and Kennedys. His prose works are at once original, in the best sense, and also instinct with the energies of the times we are living in, and with those eternal sentiments of right, freedom, and faith, which are common to all times. They are so different, in their whole conception, substance, and style, from the tales of Washington Irving, as scarcely to admit of mention in the same critique, except for purposes of contrast; as we might associate Ebenezer Elliott with D'Israeli, or Landseer with Claude. They unite much of the vivid dramatic force of "Paul Felton," the exquisite delineation of sentiment and scenery in "Kavanagh," the national temper of "Hope Leslie," and the sharp intellectual analysis and vigorous characterization of "The Scarlet Letter."

*Report of the Case of John W. Webster, indicted for the Murder of George Parkman.* By George Bemis, Esq. one of the Counsel in the case. Boston: Little and Brown. 1850.

All that is necessary to say respecting this volume is, that it is the one authentic and reliable report of the trial, with all matters antecedent and subsequent pertaining thereto. Probably very few criminal trials have been reported so ably. Thorough information has been patiently sought from every quarter by Mr. Bemis in respect to the most unimportant details; and now this huge octavo stands, the melancholy record of the terrible crime, — to how many hearts a treasury of painful recollections! Would to Heaven every other memorial of the dreadful deed, written and unwritten, visible and invisible, could perish from the world!

B. H. GREENE publishes and sells *The Snow Drop*, a juvenile magazine, edited by Mrs. Cushing and Mrs. Cheney at Montreal. We have hardly seen any magazine for children embracing so great a variety in the contents. Almost every thing in the way of narrative, description, fable, natural history, allegory, anecdote, enigma, prose, poetry, and music, that can interest children of different ages, is to be found in it. The subscription is only one dollar a year. The names of the editors, and the contents of the

numbers we have examined, warrant us in recommending it with confidence.

Also, *Pebbles from the Sea-shore, or Lizzie's First Gleanings, by a Father*. — A little book that we should as soon select to put into the hands of a child from four to seven years old as any we know, being written by a person who has the talent and the tact, the mind and the heart, or in one word the genius, of writing for children, in a very uncommon degree.

Also, *The Rose-bud, a Juvenile Keepsake, by Susan W. Jewett*.

TICKNOR, REED, & FIELDS publish *History of my Pets, by Grace Greenwood; with Engravings from Designs by Billings*. — Entertaining stories of domestic animals and birds, full of good-nature, wit and spirit, by a writer who seems to have persuaded all critics, and the public generally, to love and praise her.

FRANCIS & Co. of New York, issue the various tales of Hans Christian Andersen, with illustrations. We have before us *Little Ellie and other Tales, The Ugly Duck and other Tales, The Story-teller*. Andersen and his writings have attained so wide and favorable a reputation, that a recommendation of them by us will not be needed or expected by our readers.

CROSBY & NICHOLS promise a special prize this year to all the young people, in *Cousin Hatty's Hymns and Twilight Stories*, designed for the youngest class of readers, written by a young lady in Boston well qualified for her benevolent task, a lover of little children, and destined, through this entertaining gift, to be loved by multitudes of them in return. The engravings are beautiful, and the poetry just the thing for boys and girls to learn *by heart*.

They have also *The District School as it Was, by One who went to It; revised edition*; — not only a very graphic picture of one of the characteristic institutions of New England, but a production overflowing with genial sentiments, shrewd suggestions, and enlightened ideas on education.

Also, *The Little Messenger Birds, or the Chimes of the Silver Bells, by Mrs. Caroline H. Butler*. — Here we have a hundred and seventy-one large handsome pages, covered with delightful stories in verse and prose, interspersed with illustrations. The book is peculiarly designed for Christmas, and no one that we have seen is more happily adapted for a Christmas present. Knowing the author, we can vouch for her trustworthiness. Nothing can be

found in it inconsistent with the simple beauty and maternal tenderness of the dedication, "To my children this volume is affectionately dedicated by their mother."

Also, *A Study for Young Men*; being *Rev. Thomas Binney's Sketch of the Life and Character of Sir Thomas Powell Buxton*. — Few better examples of manly excellence can be found than Buxton; and Mr. Binney is one of the most popular writers among the Dissenters in England.

Also, *Religious Thoughts and Opinions*, — an American edition of the English translation of Humboldt's Letters to his Austrian friend, mostly on the high themes of providence, duty, and faith. It is certainly a grateful spectacle, — that of a minister of state at a European court, and one of the most accomplished diplomatists of the age, rendering in his earnest and mature testimony to the religion of Christ.

*The Fugitive Slave Law; a Discourse by Rev. J. G. Forman, of West Bridgewater*. — Mr. Forman is one of those ministers of the gospel who have desired to prophesy true things on this subject rather than smooth things, preaching to the conscience rather than the pocket. As far-sighted statesmen ought to have foreseen, the working of this bad measure irritates both North and South. The sense of justice and humanity at the North is outraged, and the pride of the South is exasperated. The famous device for *pacification* has provoked present discord, and threatens future danger. In the great commercial centres, the new law finds a natural support, or at least is vigorously winked at; but souls, too free for self-interest, dictation, and sophistry to subjugate, recoil from it, and yearn for its early repeal. The sooner it is repealed the better for the honor, good faith, integrity, and general security of the country. Till that is done, the nation is subject to the disgrace of retaining among its enactments what is at once an offence to humanity, an occasion of reproach from the friends of liberty and of man everywhere, and a scandal to thousands and thousands of peace-loving and law-respecting citizens who revere the authority of God more than the commandments of men. Because judgment against an evil work is not executed speedily, let not the hearts of the children of men be set in them to do evil.

Furthermore, it is quite generally admitted, that the only way in which this law, standing unrepealed, can leave the two sections of the country at peace, is by its remaining a dead letter; the South waving its legal right to enforce its execution. In other words, a public falsehood, legalized by the national Congress, is to

be the palliative of sectional pride. As a question in morals, we commend this consideration to those Christians among us who denounce all candid opposition to the law as treason against the Union, and make or applaud platform speeches in its defence, while they privately avow their determination to shelter the fugitive, and speed his flight from the master.

*Every Thing Beautiful in His Time, a Discourse by Rev. W. P. Lunt.* — This sermon gathers up, with the skill of a practised hand and the delicate perception of a poet's eye, the evidences of God's wise mercy that are scattered through the domains of the visible creation and human life. It concludes with a just notice of the character and death of the late Mrs. Eliza S. M. Quincy, wife of Hon. Josiah Quincy.

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## INTELLIGENCE.

THE friends of the Meadville Theological School, deeming the past success of that institution a sufficient guaranty for its usefulness in future, are making an appeal to the liberal Christians of the country to unite in planting the seminary on a secure pecuniary foundation by a subscription of fifty thousand dollars; ten thousand of these, with land for a building, having been subscribed at Meadville. Showing good reasons, their call will doubtless be sustained. — Mr. Henry J. Hudson is engaged for the present to preach at Southington, Con.; Rev. C. H. A. Dall, at Toronto; Rev. Mordecai De Lange, at Pittsburg, Pa.; Rev. Mr. Pons, at Nantucket.

POPEERY IN ENGLAND. — The recent attempt of the Pope to district off the English population into Bishoprics of the Romish See has excited a great deal of temporary indignation, popular, political, and ecclesiastical. It would seem that a church, which so seldom acts without a cautious, cunning, and far-reaching policy, must have had some ulterior design in this measure, not obvious to the general eye. At present it is difficult to see what other effect it is likely to have than to force Oxfordism to define itself, draw the lines between Papacy and Prelacy more distinctly, and afford the *really* Protestant England an opportunity for gnashing its teeth.